

Creative Writing Prompts

Character Writing Practice



**Character Writing Prompts**

**A. Writing Prompt 37: Shading**

Jeff is a very analytical-thinking stock broker; people call him cold-blooded. Sheryl is an elementary school teacher with a big heart. Andy is an always positive and slightly naive flight attendant.

Describe their characters and add one trait to each of them that doesn’t look like them at all. Describe why they have this trait.

*What it’s good for:*

Giving your characters an unexpected trait is called “Shading.” E.g. the wealthy, stingy man, who often gives to charity, so he can have the feeling his life has more meaning. If the unexpected trait makes sense, it will give your character a lot of depth and make her look very three-dimensional.

**B. Writing Prompt 38: Description**

Romeo is a young private detective who dresses like a college boy, with baseball cap and saggy clothes (excellent disguise!). Lana is a stressed restaurant manager. Hannah is a street-artist selling her artwork on a busy corner.

You are having coffee on a lazy Sunday afternoon and are observing each of them separately. Describe their looks, clothes, movements, etc…, so we get a sense for who they are.

*What it’s good for:*

Train to describe your characters with this one. Give your readers a sense for who your figures are, simply by listing observations about them. This is pure “Show, don’t tell!” and satisfying for your reader, as she feels like the observer herself.

**C. Writing Prompt 39: Backstory**

Mariella is an arrogant high-society lady with an expensive fur coat and a little poodle. Henry is a pickpocket with the body language of a beaten dog. Susan is a “speedy reporter,” always driven by the desire to get the latest news first.

Describe their backstories in a couple of sentences each: How did they grow up? What are their biggest fears and desires? What made them who they are? How were they hurt?

*What it’s good for:*

This prompt will get you into the habit of rooting your characters in a strong backstory. It will make them look as embraceable as your best friend.

**D. Writing Prompt 40: Behavior**

Hans is a funny hot-dog street vendor who likes to entertain his customers. Tia is a tax inspector who always welcomes expensive jewelry from companies. Laura is a waitress who is really good at making her customers feel welcome.

Show us how each of these characters would react to the following situations: Somebody carelessly shoving them on public transport. An acquaintance (not friend) asking them to borrow some money. Finding a beautiful rare snail during a bike trip.

*What it’s good for:*

Here you are letting your characters act out of their distinctive personalities. We all react very differently to the same situations. Let your figures express themselves!